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## THE HOLIDAY CONFERENCE OF 1897

THE Thirteenth Holiday Conference of the Associated Academic Principals of the State of New York, was held at Syracuse, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, December 28-30, 1897. The meeting was by far the largest in the history of the organization. At the morning session (Wednesday) the great assembly-room of the high school was crowded, and in the afternoon, though the meetings of the science group and the teachers' training classes group filled the two large rooms which had been assigned to them, the assembly-room, where the English group met, was still comfortably filled, the attendance at this one group being larger than that of the entire conference at many previous meetings.

As on all previous occasions, the social side was given due prominence. The programme provided for an informal meeting and registration in the lobby of the Yates Hotel, at 5 P.M. Tuesday. The attendance on this occasion was very large. At the same place State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Charles R. Skinner, called together some of the most prominent educators of the state to perfect plans for the erection of a memorial to the late Principal Sheldon, of the Oswego Normal School. At this meeting an association was organized to be known as the "Sheldon Memorial Association," and the following officers were elected: President, State Superintendent C. R. Skinner; Secretary, H. R. Sanford; Treasurer, ex-Senator George B. Sloan.

The following committee was appointed to devise ways and means: Hon. Charles R. Skinner, John M. Milne, of Geneseo; T. B. Stowell, of Potsdam; I. H. Stout, of Geneva; A. B. Blodgett, of Syracuse; Dr. O. D. Robinson, of Albany, and C. E. Franklin of Albany. Later it was announced that the committee had decided that the memorial should be either a marble or a bronze statue of Dr. Sheldon. In the former case it was proposed to

place it within the state capitol at Albany, in the latter case, in the grounds of the capitol. To erect such a memorial, it was estimated that \$10,000 would be necessary, and it was proposed that the money should be raised among the school children and educators of the state, and paid in during Arbor Day week.

The reception, which the chancellor and faculty of Syracuse University gave in Crouse College Tuesday evening, was largely attended.

The first business session was opened Wednesday morning with a brief address of welcome by the president, Oscar D. Robinson, in which he expressed the sense of loss which the conference had sustained by the death of Principal Sheldon. The usual reports of standing committees followed. Among these, Principal Lyttle, of Watertown, submitted a report on annuities for teachers, in which the following recommendations were made: "That the Annuity Society should be formed, that the membership should be purely voluntary; anyone withdrawing should forfeit its benefits; the state treasurer to be the custodian of the funds; applicants should present a certificate of good health; a graduated rate according to age should be made; there should be no difference in rates on account of sex, and that membership in any city annuity society should not debar anyone from the state organization." The report was accepted and the committee continued.

The first topic for the morning was as follows: "Is the preparation made by the grades for admission to the high schools satisfactory? If not, how can it be improved?" The discussion was opened by Principal Lyttle, of Watertown. He answered the question in the negative, and criticised in particular the course in arithmetic as unnecessarily prolonged. The study of geography, too, was made uninteresting, while history was neglected, and the work in general deficient on the score of moral training. The responsibility for the unsatisfactory state of things, the speaker thought, was to be charged, first, to deficiencies in the teachers on the score of knowledge, experience, and personal character, and, secondly, to the unsatisfac-

tory organization of the teaching force. In the discussion which followed, the subject of arithmetic received much attention, the prevailing opinion seeming to be that much superfluous matter was included in this subject. The introduction of Latin into the primary course was also referred to, and opinions seemed to be somewhat divided as to the practicability of putting this subject into the common schools.

After a brief recess it was announced that Professor Bennett, of Cornell University, would open the discussion of the next subject: "Latin and Greek in the High School Curriculum," which the programme announced was to be discussed on the basis of the "Report of the Committee of Twelve of the American Philological Association." Professor Bennett began the discussion by pointing out that the first statement in the Preliminary Report of the Committee of Twelve was not strictly accurate. It seems to be stated therein that the Philological Association directed its Committee of Twelve to draw up their model programmes in response to a request made by the National Educational Association at the Buffalo meeting in July 1896. The facts of the case, as shown by Professor Bennett, are, that the request emanated not from the National Educational Association as a body, but from the joint committee on college entrance requirements of the departments of higher and secondary education of the National Educational Association, and was made at a meeting at which only six of the ten members of the joint committee were present.<sup>1</sup> Further, model courses were not asked for, but only recommendations of a general nature. It was, therefore, not exactly accurate to assume that the National Association was responsible for these programmes. The speaker then proceeded to criticise the programmes in

<sup>1</sup> This statement is an entire mistake. It is unfortunate that Professor Bennett should have made it, and amazing that no one in his audience should have corrected it. As a matter of fact the motion to invite the American Philological Association to prepare programmes for Latin and Greek was presented and adopted in a joint meeting of the Department of Secondary Education and the Department of Higher Education, with an attendance of between eight hundred and a thousand, one of the largest gatherings of representatives of higher education ever assembled in the United States. —[ED. SCHOOL REVIEW.]

general, expressing himself as feeling no sympathy with the attempts to impose a detailed sequence of study. Such a procedure made teaching mechanical and method superior to knowledge. Professor Bennett closed his paper with a criticism of certain details of the programmes.

Dr. J. W. Scudder, of Albany, followed with an address on the teaching of Latin in the secondary schools. In the course of his remarks he advocated the introduction of Latin into the grammar school and this brought on a renewal of the discussion of this subject, in which many more opinions favorable to the innovation were expressed. Of interest in this connection were the remarks of Principal Bartlett, of Auburn, who reported the successful introduction of the study into the grammar schools of his city.

Following the innovation of last year the Conference held its session Wednesday afternoon in three groups. These were, 1. English in the high school; conducted by Principal Chas. W. Evans. 2. Teachers training classes; conducted by Principal Frank J. House. 3. Science in secondary schools; its scope and method; conducted by Professor E. W. Wetmore, of the State Normal College. The proceedings of the several groups are best summarized by the following resolutions, which were reported to the Conference at the Thursday morning session.

The English group reported as follows:

That the lack of harmony in regard to English teaching is due to two causes: First, to the fact that new aims have recently appeared to the teachers of English, and, secondly, to the fact that the colleges have made a great diversity of requirements.

That the best methods of teaching English are yet to be found.

That every recitation should be made to contribute to good English.

That much oral composition and topical recitation may profitably be called for.

That a large amount of poetry and literature adapted to the age of the pupils, should be studied in the grades.

That English should always be regarded as a means, not as an end.

That English should be considered of first importance in the high school and it should not be dropped nor abridged for less important subjects.

That the present demands for English are not excessive.

That daily practice in writing English is desirable, but that the written work should be distributed among classes in other subjects.

That the study of nature is necessary for the highest literary appreciation.

That the discussion of the larger principles of literary criticism will greatly add to the pupil's interest and form of the basis of much valuable composition work.

The following resolution was reported to the Conference by the science group :

*Resolved*, That in every high-school course the equivalent of five periods a week for one year should be devoted to physics.

The group on Teachers' Training Classes, reported the following resolution, which was adopted among the resolutions of the Conference :

*Resolved*, That it be the sentiment of this conference that a certain fixed sum of not less than \$500 be granted by the state to every school maintaining a training class.

Wednesday evening President M. W. Stryker, of Hamilton College, delivered an address in the City Hall before the conference and the New York State Grammar School Council. Dr. Stryker is a fine speaker and worthily upholds the oratorical tradition of Hamilton College. His address on education was largely an eloquent plea for the retention of the old-time significance of the A.B. degree.

The first part of the session Thursday was devoted to business. After the reports of the group meetings and the treasurer had been presented the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, J. C. Norris, of Canandaigua; Vice President, D. C. Farr, of Glens Falls; Secretary, S. D. Arms, of Palmyra; Assistant Secretary, Jay Crissey, of Belmont; Executive Committee, E. W. Lyttle, of Watertown; Dr. Edward Hayward, of Lockport, and W. D. Johnson, of Cooperstown.

After the business had been disposed of, the remainder of the forenoon was devoted to the topics on the programme. President Booth C. Davis, of Alfred University, discussed the

certificate system for college entrance. The speaker advocated a system of admission by certificate, believing that its success depended on the coöperation and federation of colleges and secondary schools.

The second topic, "History in the High Schools, How Much and in What Order?" was discussed by Professor W. H. Mace, of Syracuse University, who pointed out the different aims that should guide the presentation of the subject in the grammar grades, secondary school, and college.

Superintendent A. B. Blodgett, of Syracuse, gave a brief address on the Principal's Relation to the Community, which was received by the Conference with great enthusiasm and by unanimous resolution was ordered printed for distribution through the state.

Principal Lyttle presented the following report of the Committee on Resolutions :

*Resolved*, That the study of arithmetic should be simplified, and that the time given to this subject may be somewhat abridged.

*Resolved*, That the teaching of geography should be greatly improved ; that this improvement may be secured by giving greater prominence to relief forms and other physical features as a basis for other work, and that history should be correlated with the work in geography.

*Resolved*, That the grammar school curriculum should be enriched, but that great care is necessary in making experiments in this direction on a larger scale.

*Resolved*, That the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of New York be urged to encourage the introduction of the study of Latin or some other foreign language in the eighth and ninth grades.

*Resolved*, That while we approve of a high standard of requirement for admission to colleges, while we do not regard the present requirements as being too high, we deplore and deprecate the tendency of the colleges to attempt to prescribe courses of study for secondary schools like that proposed by the Committee of Twelve, and desire to register our protest against such attempts.

*Resolved*, That while we desire uniformity in options, we do not desire definite prescription as to either exact subjects or methods for college preparation.

*Resolved*, That the Associated Academic Principals of the State of New York cordially request the other educational associations of the state to hold

each year a winter meeting in Syracuse during holiday week, thus establishing a general educational reunion with opportunity for full personal acquaintance and conference among representatives of different phases for our common work.

After the transaction of a few other general items of business the Conference adjourned.

F. H. HOWARD

COLGATE ACADEMY